



Creative Tourism in Environmental Issues in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

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creative tourism, entrepreneur's perspective, environmental issues, interpretation, participation model, sustainable tourism, Thailand context, tourists' experiences

This study aimed to explore seasonal calendar, and investigate participation model, tourists' experiences, as well as interpretation theories in the context of creative tourism in environmental issues from creative tourism entrepreneurs' perspective in Thailand. 10 environmental activities from 10 creative tourism entrepreneurs were purposively and snowball sampled. Data were collected by using in-depth interviews together with voice and digital photo recordings, note taking, observations, and GPS application records. Data were then analyzed by content analysis, and triangulated with different data collection methods. Results advised an optimum seasonal calendar of creative tourism in environmental issues in Thailand, and also indicated that almost all the creative tourists participated in all types of participation model. Active participation was the key at creative tourism activities that made creative tourists reach experiences of cognitive, affective, and sensory kinds. In addition, participation in sharing ideas brought added value in both monetary and non-monetary terms. Personal and non-personal interpretations were also used, and especially emerging technologies in communication were found to influence participation in sharing creative ideas via websites and social media, which has not been reported in earlier interpretation research findings.

1. INTRODUCTION

Creative economy - which has been discussed on policy level in Thailand's since 2008 - means imaginative and innovative marketing of the nation's art, culture, and identity [1]. This is similar to other countries that also promote this concept to increase national income [2-4]. At present, Thailand's government supports 15 creative industries, and 'creative tourism' is one of these.

Creative tourism has been developed from cultural tourism, and creative tourists participate during their travel rather than only sightseeing [5]. This kind of tourism makes a profit from the creative economy supporting the creative tourists' activities [6]. Besides, creative tourism - or experience economy, educational tourism - is a kind of tourism that creative tourists themselves seek for experiences and relationships, rather than accepting a pre-designed itinerary from a tour operator [5].

Creative tourism has been defined in numerous ways. For example, in a well-known definition by Richards & Raymond it means "tourism which offers tourists the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses and learning experiences which are the characteristic of the destination where they are undertaken" [7]. Another similar definition given by UNESCO states it is "travel directed toward an engaged and authentic experience, with participative learning in the arts, heritage, or special character of place, and it provides a connection with those

who reside in this place and create this living culture" [8]. Tan et al. further mentioned that creative tourism is tourism that relates to participation; firsthand experiences will allow creative tourists to find themselves creatively, seeking passion during travel along with new creativity [5].

Creative tourism is thereby an extension of traditional cultural tourism, in that tourists are searching meaningful interactive experiences, and it helps them in personal development and identity creation, or this makes the creative tourists co-creators or co-producers. Creative tourists prefer to produce their own goods and services, such as making their own clothes, and/or cooking their own local food, visiting dance workshops, staying in an art-residency to be inspired, taking pottery classes, making crafts, painting pictures and porcelain, making perfumes, learning a local language, and learning about local culture while on vacation [5]. These examples can be sorted into six groups that make the tourists perceive creativity and creative experiences: 1) food culture, 2) life education, 3) natural ecology system, 4) interior, 5) arts and history, and 6) arts and cultures [9]. Similar creative tourism activities sorted by UNWTO are divided as follows: 1) culinary heritage, 2) beliefs and traditions, 3) creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, 4) arts and architecture, 5) historical and cultural heritage, 6) literature, 7) music, and 8) value systems [10]. Thongbai also included designs and movies into creative activities [11].

So, creative tourism is designed for the tourists' own choices, or it is a tailor-made trip rather than a pre-designed

itinerary [11, 12]. With these creative tourists' needs, creative tourism relates to an active participation in authentic experiences that allow the tourists to develop their creative potential and skills through contact with local people and their culture. It can be concluded that creative tourism is also a kind of sustainable tourism, because the creative resources are unique experiences that are invaluable. Creative aspects add value from the tourists' perspective via the natural and cultural experiences, while also being more sustainable than tangible products such as architecture, furniture, and motif. There is no need to create or conserve heritage with a large budget: instead, creative tourism supported by intangible assets (such as reminiscences and traditions) is preserved by the tourists' experiences [5, 13].

Recent studies on creative tourism, especially in Thailand's context, have focused mostly on culture; for example, local brewery, local basketry, and varieties of cultures [14-17]. However, some creative tourism entrepreneurs have designed creative tourism especially in environmental issues - developed from ecotourism such as travel in natural areas, and learning about animals, plants, and human life from different ecological contexts [18] - but creative tourism in environmental issues is not only listening to information from the interpreters: it is also focused on active participation from tourists in environmental activities to gain skills for sustaining the environment or reducing impacts on it. This is concordant with the natural ecology system as one of the creative experiences defined by Creative Life Industries - but only few studies have reported on this relevant issue on interpretation, participation, tourists' experiences, as well as the essential locality specific seasonal calendar [9].

Results from this study could be different from general creative tourism studies focused on cultures; however, creative tourism in environmental issues from this research could give new insights on interpretation model, participation model, tourists' experiences, as well as a local seasonal calendar that is important to know, because it is related to external environmental factors that are difficult or impossible to control, but that still are knowable, predictable, and adaptable; while there is very little such information in the prior studies, or they have been done in a different context.

Consequently, the key research questions in this study are: 1) what are seasonal calendar periods for creative tourism focused on environmental issues in Thailand; 2) what are the interpretation models applicable to creative tourism on environmental issues in Thailand; and 3) what are participation models used as well as creative tourists' experiences in creative tourism on environmental issues in Thailand from the creative entrepreneurs' perspective.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Principles of creative tourism

Knowledge Management Section, Office of Strategic Management, Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (Public Organisation) [19]; and Wisudthiluck et al. [20], mentioned that creative tourism activities should be composed so as to align with the following principles.

- 1) creative tourists and creative entrepreneurs should engage together
- 2) there is information exchange, or transformation and

transformative experiences

- 3) there is cross-cultural engagement, or cultural experience
- 4) creative tourists experience more participation than observation
- 5) creative tourists have chances for lifelong learning, or co-creating tourism experiences
- 6) creative tourists learn to appreciate the local culture, and
- 7) creative tourism is a tailor-made approach.

It can be concluded from the above principles of creative tourism that there are three major theories involved, for use to elaborate on this research: participation theory, tourists' experiences, and interpretation theory. The details are explained below.

2.1.1 Participation model in creative tourism

Arnstein published a general participation model from lowest to highest levels of participation in 1969, as well as mainly focused on participation in decision control [21], while Tosun [22] later published and elaborated a participation model especially in tourism development that divided participation in three types: coercive, induced, and spontaneous participation, while Muneenam and Srichoo [23] presented a variety of participation models -structured model, participation models by technique, process, and level - to explain and interpret the best outcome. In addition, creative tourism develops another position of public participation model from the above-mentioned definitions that focus on 'active participation', as well as some more ideas that Thongbai stated, namely: 1) participation in learning knowledge, experiences, or skills; 2) participation in creative idea sharing; as well as 3) participation in sharing with community that is similar and overlaps with the above mentioned participation models [11]. Similar participation model from Ngamsirijit and Tepanon [24] categorised participation in creative tourism into acknowledge level (taking boat, and walking tour), learning level (food tasting, local shopping, and historical sightseeing and lifestyle learning), and creative level (active and first-hand experience learning); while a traditional participation model (especially in context of Thailand from Office of the Decentralization to the Local Government Organization Committee, The Prime Minister's Office and Research Centre for Law and Development, Faculty of Law, Chulalongkorn University) also included beneficiary participation [25]. It can be concluded that the more participation, the more insights will be learned, adapted, and applied to daily life depending on the interests.

Besides, it can be concluded that participation in learning and/or sharing alone (passive participation) – such as the tourists gaining knowledge from personal and/or non-personal interpreter by seeing, listening, and sharing feedback to that interpreter – without active participation can't reach the core of creative tourism principles [5]. In contrast, creative tourism must at least include active participation, and other types of participation may be involved intentionally or unintentionally in the creative tourism process (see Figure 1). This is also similar to what Dachum [26] mentioned, in that creative tourism is different from traditional cultural tourism in which tourists only learn from essentially sightseeing.

With active participation in creative tourism both the tourists and the local hosts have a chance to learn together, not

just only on the tourists' side but also on the local hosts' side, by sharing creative ideas (or in co-creation or co-design), and exchanging and creatively crystallising new knowledge, as well as by co-beneficiary participation, especially in cognitive and affective experiences. So, knowledge creation could stem from both local hosts and creative tourists, who bring knowledge to each from their side to share and exchange. However, most of the studies focus only on benefits from the tourists' experiences, while beneficial impacts to tourism providers and/or tourists from their participation in creative tourism could be studied in a tourism impact assessment [27]. For example, the study of Chirakranont and Sakdiyakorn [14] found tourism experiences from both tourists and tourism providers in co-creative experiences and transformative experiences. However, this current study focuses on the tourists' experiences from a creative entrepreneur's perspective and sorts them by the beneficiary participation.

Consequently, this research article reviews and explains a proposed public participation model used to analyse creative

tourism as follows (see Figure 1 and Table 1):

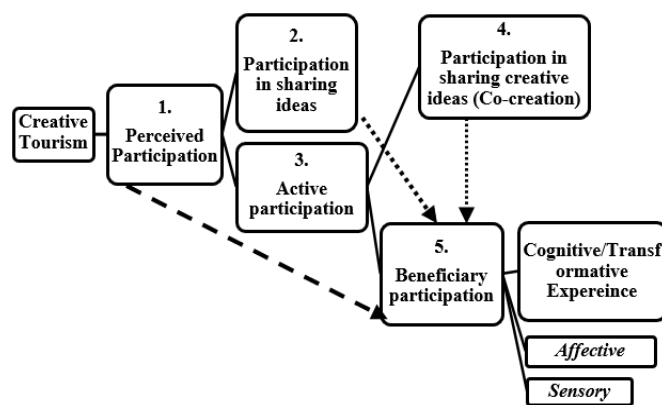


Figure 1. Proposed participation model in creative tourism
Source: Authors' elaboration only for this article

Table 1. Proposed participation model in creative tourism

Participation Model	Meaning
Perceived Participation (Education Experiences)*	Creative tourist gains knowledge, experiences, and skills of storytelling from personal and/or non-personal interpretations.
Participation in sharing ideas*	Creative tourist shares ideas and evaluates the creative operator; however, creative operator has no responses.
Active participation (Escapism Experiences)**	Creative tourist is in active participation such as doing, cooking, decorating, dining, or planting trees at the selected travel destination.
Participation in sharing creative ideas**	Both creative tourist and creative operator are sharing creative ideas in shared thinking, shared planning, shared decision-making, and shared evaluations, or what is called 'co-creation or co-design'.
Beneficiary participation**	Creative tourist gains benefits from creative tourism explained by 'customer experiences' in three aspects: (1) Cognitive or transformative experiences (2) Affective experiences (3) Sensory experiences

Note. * means one-way communication; ** means two-way communication.
Source: Authors' elaboration

2.1.2 Tourists' experiences

Previous research has studied tourists' experiences in a variety of issues - remaining ungrouped - such as knowledge, satisfaction, emotion, memory, repeating, and recommending [14, 28-30], and has suggested the need for more research on qualitative results to explain experiences as proposed [30]. Researches [31-34] had sorted tourists' experiences in three kinds covering all aspects of previous research in tourists' experiences, and groups them under the beneficiary participation as presented in Figure 1 and Table 1.

- 1) Cognitive experience means knowledge received from creative tourism activities, and from active participation, for having new skills; changes to understanding; or alterations of behavior and lifestyle.
- 2) Affective experience means feeling and emotion of creative tourists when engaged in creative tourism such as services, the feelings including satisfaction/unsatisfaction, neutral feeling, positive perspective, happiness, intention to buy products, relationship between creative tourists and creative hosts; having new attitudes and beliefs, revision of belief system.
- 3) Sensory experiences are experiences received from the five senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting) provided by creative tourism. For example, overall feeling regarding creative tourism,

physical appearance, food and drink, natural environment, arts and cultures, beauty of scenery, and excitement, particularly when these add value encouraging interest and responses.

2.1.3 Interpretation in creative tourism

Interpretation has been long defined by numerous authors, but without much differences [35-37]. For example, a definition from the father of heritage interpretation - Freeman Tilden - states that "Interpretation aims to reveal meanings and relationships through original objects, by first-hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information" [38]. This definition is concordant with the principles of creative tourism, especially in requiring a firsthand experience.

Interpretation can be sorted into two main categories: 1) personal interpretation such as on a guided tour, third-person style as costumed interpretation, and first-person style as living history; and 2) non-personal interpretation such as given by a museum, or printed and mixed media interpretation [39].

This study applied the above interpretation information as an educational condition of creative tourism [5], to interpret firsthand experience of creative tourism. In addition, Knudson et al. [39] suggested interpretation evaluation by either qualitative or quantitative ways. This study follows the suggestion by Knudson et al. [39] on interpretation evaluation by using post-occupancy evaluation techniques, such as

observation, field visit, interpreter interview with note taking, and photo recording, in three issues: 1) how creative tourists react to creative interpretation; 2) observation of non-personal interpretation on whether objective of creative tourism is achieved; and 3) overall evaluation of interpretation.

3. METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative study design. The targeted population were firstly reviewed and selected from the “creative tourism on environmental issues” from the previous data based on research in Thailand [40]. However, the results from southern Thailand were priority selected.

After second screening especially from the “active participation” criteria from their profiles on the active social media advertisements to make sure that they still provide creative tourism services after COVID-19, the representatives were selected and invited to participate in this research. Only willing representatives were finally selected and involved with this study.

Study area and samples were then selected to include 10 creative tourism entrepreneurs by purposive and snowball sampling methods, in order to study seasonal calendar, participation model, tourists’ experiences, and interpretation used of creative tourism on environmental issues focused on animals, plants, and human life from different ecological aspects from the entrepreneurs’ perspective (see Figure 2). Most of the samples were situated in southern peninsular Thailand, while two of them were from northern and northeastern Thailand due to their distinctive creative activities (see Table 2).

interviewer, interview schedule to make sure that all questions and issues were covered, digital camera to record atmosphere and creative tourism activities, voice recorder and note taking to record voice interviews and to make sure data are valid as well as to re-check data if needed, and GPS application to record study area and produce creative tourism site map (see Figure 2). This research has been approved with a human ethics research certification, PSU Human Research Ethics Committee, Prince of Songkla University, since 25 January 2023 (PSU-HREC-2022-006-1-1). After that 10 volunteer participants that are creative tourism entrepreneurs were invited to interviews with notes taken, digital photo taken, voice recorded, and GPS data recorded with permission.

Data were analyzed by content analysis [41] by firstly transcribing the voice recording to increase reliability, coding from the relevant theories on interpretation, participation and tourists’ experiences; then, data were displayed, interpreted and concluded; finally, the data were triangulated with different data collection methods to ensure validity [41].

Table 2. 10 Creative tourism entrepreneurs ordered by interview date in 2023 (n = 10)

No.	CODE	Entrepreneur, Province	Interview Date
1	VL001	Tropical pitcher plant ecology, Satun	21 February
2	VL002	Seagrass plantation, Trang	28 February
3	VL003	Organic farm, Songkhla	7 March
4	VL004	BCG of northern plant product, Chiangrai	28 March
5	VL005	Fish homeland conservation, Pattani	18 May
6	VL006	Crab bank, Suratthani	6 June
7	VL007	Solar energy, Loei	5 July
8	VL008	Hawk watching, Chumphon	26 September
9	VL009	Tin mining conservation, Phangnga	17 October
10	VL010	Thai water onion conservation, Ranong	13 November

Source: Authors’ elaboration

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Seasonal calendar of creative tourism

Table 3 presents a seasonal calendar suggested for creative tourism, to have the activities at an optimum time for the best tourist experiences and for reducing uncertainties. This was done because creative tourism activities, especially in environmental issues, relate to seasonal situations and picking the right time would be best. On the other hand, if creative tourists visit a creative tourism site at the wrong time, they might not be able to participate in any creative tourism activities, giving an unsatisfactory experience. The concern could be optimum tide (time) for seagrass plantation, risks from monsoon season to a creative activity offshore, and optimum time to get the best pictures for retaining a good memory. Making an appointment with the creative tourism operator before heading to the trip would be ideal. Also, the research by Al-Mohammad and Butler [42] recommends using travel season concept to attract tourists, to secure their satisfaction and decisions for travel.

4.2 Interpretation methods of creative tourism

Table 4 presents interpretation methods used in creative



Figure 2. Sampling of 10 creative tourism cases in environmental issues

Note. This figure was produced purposely for only this research article

Research tools included experienced researcher as

tourism studies, showing that there were two major methods of interpretation. Personal and non-personal interpretations are concordant with studies by Chirakranont and Sakdiyakorn [14] and Ward and Wilkinson [37]. Personal interpretations included tour guided in the local language, or tour guided in a foreign language, providing interpretation from local tour guide by themselves, or by tour guides who came with the creative tourists in case the local tour guides can't serve in other languages than their local language. In addition, word of mouth (WoM) and pre-departure information from teacher, tour agency, or from lectures in the classroom may have persuaded the creative tourists to finally decide to participate in the creative tourism activities. Non-personal interpretations were emerging of, for example, official and/or personal social media (websites, YouTube, Facebook, Line, or Messenger group), as well as traditional non-personal interpretations in

sign, exhibition, real object, pamphlet, and VDO presentation. Besides, E-WoM (Electronic Word of Mouth) was also considered non-personal interpretation in this study. For example, professional reviewers who visit at the creative tourism site, participated in creative activities with local personal interpreter; then they interpreted and broadcast new media such as photos and texts, or a VDO presentation on social media such as Facebook, TikTok, or YouTube. Similar to the definition summarised by Agag et al. [43]; and Balamoorthy and Chandra [44], E-WoM is the “*informal positive or negative communication that takes place by actual former consumers with reference to a product, service, or company on internet-based technology.*” This also influences decision making by newcomers of creative tourists on their participation in creative tourism activities [45, 46].

Table 3. Seasonal calendar for creative tourism (n = 10)

Creative Tourism	Month											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Sticky rice cooking in pitcher plant	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓
Seagrass plantation in ocean	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓
Seagrass plantation in canal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Organic farm and composting waste			✓	✓	✓	✓						
Macadamia factory visit from farm to final waste	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fish (<i>Sung</i>) homeland conservation (07.00 am. to 12.00 am.)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Crab bank (16.00 pm. to 18.00 pm.)				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DIY solar energy (1 full day)	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓
Hawk watching and photo shooting (09.00 am. to 12.00 am.)									✓	✓	✓	
Tin mining (Rainy season)									✓	✓	✓	
Thai water onion conservation (1-2 hours)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Seeds collection			Planting			Restoration			Flowers watching		

Source: Authors' elaboration

Table 4. Interpretation methods used in 10 creative tourism sites sampled (n = 10)

Interpretation Methods	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL	VL
	001	002	003	004	005	006	007	008	009	010	
Tour guided in local language	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tour guided in foreign language	✓	✓	-	✓	✓ (Malay language)	(Creative tourists with their own interpreter)	(Creative tourists with their own interpreter)	✓	-	✓	✓
Personal											
Pre-departure information such as from teacher, tour agency, lectures in the classroom	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-
WoM	-	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-
Official social media	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (AgaligoDIY (YouTube))	✓ (ARRCN, The flyway foundation, Thailand, Chumphonraptorcenter Thailand)	✓	✓	✓
Line or Messenger	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
Non-personal											
Personal social media	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	✓	✓
Signs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exhibition	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Real objects	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pamphlet	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	✓
VDO presentation at airport/TV program	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	-
E-WoM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓

Source: Authors' elaboration

Results from this study extend knowledge of personal and non-personal interpretations from previous traditional interpretation theory [35-37]; for example, pre-departure information, or emerging Line Messenger and E-WoM that are not limited to only interpretations from entrepreneurs themselves. In addition, results also show that new emerging media influences interpretations, and can be used in *pre* and *post* services of creative tourism experiences, in case the creative tourist would like to continue to share more ideas before making a decision to participate, or to discuss some future ideas. Also Researches [37, 47-49] mentioned that tourists learn from both personal and non-personal interpretations, such as online tour reviews and information on social media, attracting the tourists to decide to participate at various levels of participation. The advances in communication technology have allowed tourists to be actively involved throughout the entire process of travel by searching for, comparing, defining, evaluating, and sharing tourism experiences before, during, and after the journey; tourists learning earlier from advertisements or mass media, tourists searching online to find reviews and recommendations on destinations; two-way communications between creative tourists and local hosts via social media (Facebook) and websites [14, 24, 26, 50].

4.3 Participation model and creative tourists' experiences

Table 5 shows results of participation model and creative tourists' experiences from the entrepreneurs' perspective, and it was found that there was creative tourism (VL005, VL006, VL007, and VL010) completely following the proposed participation model theory, and also some creative tourism activities (VL001, VL003, VL004, VL008, VL009) concordant to only some parts of the proposed participation model theory. This is similar to the explanation in Ngamsirijit and Tepanon [24] that divided participation in creative tourism into acknowledge level, learning level, and creative level of participation. For example, acknowledge level was hawk watching; learning level was listening about Thai water onion conservation; and creative level was first-hand experience in

DIY of solar cell energy in a new environment, after participating in creative tourism activity.

Besides, it was also found that sometimes it was possible, and sometimes impossible for creative tourists to participate at all levels of the participation model. For instance, in some creative tourism activities no creative tourist was sharing ideas, so there was only one-way communication (VL001, VL003, VL004, VL008, VL009). However, participation with sharing creative ideas as two-way communication was also found.

In addition, active participation of creative tourists was found; but the creative tourism entrepreneurs revealed that there was only little participation in sharing creative ideas, or even pseudo creative tourists (VL002), or the creative tourism activity was only greenwashing activity for some groups of tourists [51]. This might be because creative tourists had received pre-departure information from other sources, or the creative tourists were not sure about how to continue to use received experiences in the future (VL004), or the creative tourism activities had been accomplished as expected while new knowledge experience occurred after creative tourism activity. Then, the creative tourists had to seek for more information in the future such as after seagrass plantation participation further information regarding how the plants would survive (VL002). So, creative tourists have to continue seeking new knowledge and new experiences in either a new or the same creative journey.

One case (VL007) was dominantly about added value in monetary terms, and the creative tourism activity would be able to add value after fully participating as creative tourists, as in the following interview example: "*some of the creative tourists were able to make high profits in attaching solar energy overseas, such as in Myanmar, after they fully participated with me*" (VL007). However, the concept of added value in non-monetary terms, such as experiences of intangible assets in creative tourism were obviously found in this study, because experiences were gained and preserved by the creative tourists, and this can be passed on from one generation to the next.

Table 5. Participation model and creative tourists' experiences (n = 10)

Participant CODE	VL001
Perceived participation	Knowledge about species, components, how to grow and plant the pitcher plant in domestic home
Participation in sharing ideas	*
Participation in sharing creative ideas	Sharing information about different species, the way to eat pitcher plant sticky rice with fish, durian, mango, and cempedak
Active participation	Firsthand participation in pitcher plant sticky rice cooking
Beneficiary participation (Experiences)	
Cognitive	Knowledge in method of pitcher plant sticky rice cooking (local organic container)
Affective	Pleasant relationship between creative tourist and local host
Sensory	Seeing real object apart from book, and tasting of pitcher plant sticky rice
Participant CODE	VL002
Perceived participation	Information about how to grow seagrass
Participation in sharing ideas	Direct feedback to creative tourism entrepreneur
Participation in sharing creative ideas	Pseudo creative tourists
Active participation	Firsthand participation in seagrass plantation
Beneficiary participation (Experiences)	
Cognitive	Knowledge of seagrasses' importance, benefits, carbon absorption, strong wave reduction, animal habitat, and seagrass plantation
Affective	Satisfaction
Sensory	Seeing real object

Participant CODE	VL003
Perceived participation	Knowledge from lecture, see real objects, and practice
Participation in sharing ideas	*
Participation in sharing creative ideas	Sharing different ideas on how to be a good farmer back home
Active participation	Firsthand participation in organic farm plantation, and irrigation.
Beneficiary participation (Experiences)	
Cognitive	Tailor-made knowledge, attending seven organic farm stations
Affective	Pleasant relationship between creative tourist and local host. Fun and happiness.
Sensory	Learning by doing, listening from practitioner, and tasting honey in farmland
Participant CODE	VL004
Perceived participation	Information about local history, suitable environment for growing cold crop such as macadamia
Participation in sharing ideas	*
Participation in sharing creative ideas	Sharing ideas about different macadamia products for tourists
Active participation	Firsthand participation in macadamia harvesting, processing, and tasting
Beneficiary participation (Experiences)	
Cognitive	Knowledge in macadamia plantation, processing from cradle to grave
Affective	Pleasant relationship between creative tourist and local host
Sensory	Seeing steps of macadamia product from cradle to grave. Tasting macadamia products.
Participant CODE	VL005
Perceived participation	Information about conservation such as fish habitat (<i>Sung</i>)
Participation in sharing ideas	Direct feedback to entrepreneur, and/or during participating activity
Participation in sharing creative ideas	Sharing ideas in local lifestyle, natural resources, adaptation to conservation in different areas and environments
Active participation	Firsthand participation in collecting tools and constructing fish habitat (<i>Sung</i>)
Beneficiary participation (Experiences)	
Cognitive	Knowledge steps and how to construct fish habitat (<i>Sung</i>)
Affective	Fun and satisfaction. Relationship between creative tourist and local host. Fulfilment of creative tourists in context of natural resources.
Sensory	Practicing from the real environment
Participant CODE	VL006
Perceived participation	Information about crab conservation by crab bank concept
Participation in sharing ideas	Feedback through visit recorded in a book, and/or on social media
Participation in sharing creative ideas	Sharing ideas in developing crab bank in commercial way, application of creative tourism to gastronomic tourism
Active participation	Firsthand participation in baby crab release in natural environment
Beneficiary participation (Experiences)	
Cognitive	Knowledge about crab conservation, crab bank, increasing crab quantity at reasonable cost
Affective	Fun and satisfaction
Sensory	Practice in the real local environment, and local lifestyle. Return to travel again.
Participant CODE	VL007
Perceived participation	Renewable energy information such as on solar energy, investment and budget calculation
Participation in sharing ideas	Feedback through visit recorded a book, and/or on social media
Participation in sharing creative ideas	Application of the idea of solar energy in agricultural farmland, for retired people, monks, elders at home, and places where main energy grid is too far for access. Reducing costs by using solar energy. Trend of using contemporary energy.
Active participation	Firsthand participation in DIY (do it yourself) solar energy
Beneficiary participation (Experiences)	
Cognitive	Knowledge of solar cell energy production
Affective	Fun and satisfaction. Relationship between creative tourist and local host
Sensory	Touching physical environment where main energy has been hard to access. Learning from real example. Applying to add value in DIY or commercial solar energy production. Making more money and connection of producing solar energy in places where needed.
Participant CODE	VL008
Perceived participation	Information about species, appearance, migration season, and nature of hawk
Participation in sharing ideas	*
Participation in sharing creative ideas	Sharing information of places of hawk watching. Species and distribution of hawks. Sharing good photo shoot of hawk.
Active participation	Firsthand participation in hawks' photo shooting in different locations
Beneficiary participation (Experiences)	
Cognitive	Knowledge about hawk migration, and related research
Affective	Persuasion to search for new knowledge, and meeting new peers who love the same activity
Sensory	Hawk watching, and practicing to identify different hawk species.

Participant CODE	VL009
Perceived participation	Information about tin and tin mining
Participation in sharing ideas	*
Participation in sharing creative ideas	Sharing ideas of gold mining, and growing rice farm.
Active participation	Firsthand participation in tin mining
Beneficiary participation (Experiences)	
Cognitive	Knowledge about tin and tin mining
Affective	Fun and satisfaction in water activity while tin mining. Firsthand experience in difficult to get tin.
Sensory	Seeing real object in real natural environment. Touching the difficulty in tin mining.
Participant CODE	VL010
Perceived participation	Knowledge about Thai water onion, history of conservation, how to watch flowers, how to collect the seeds, how to grow the flower, environment for survival
Participation in sharing ideas	Feedback through visit recorded in book, and/or on social media such as Facebook, Line or Messenger
Participation in sharing creative ideas	Sharing voluntary conservative ideas on Thai water onion, the way to grow Thai water onion with survival rate, exchange creative ideas of flower watching
Active participation	Thai water onion watching, seed collecting, planting, and/or funding for distributing the conservation
Beneficiary participation (Experiences)	
Cognitive	Knowledge about Thai water onion, history of conservation, how to watch flowers, how to collect the seeds, how to grow the flower, environment for survival, ecology of Thai water onion
Affective	Happiness, fulfilling of voluntary conservation work, relationship between creative tourist and local host.
Sensory	Thai water onion watching, hearing water flow, smelling of flowers' aroma, collecting and/or growing Thai water onion, experiencing habitat of Thai water onion

Source: Authors' elaboration

4.4 Implications of the study

4.4.1 Theoretical implications

This research article aimed to reach its objectives by applying seasonal calendar concept and prior models of interpretation, participation, and tourists' experiences in creative tourism on environmental issues in Thailand. Firstly, the annual seasonal calendar was gathered and presented, with specific times by month in detail, suitable for 10 creative tourism activities, differing from some studies that gathered only a single activity in the seasonal calendar such as rice farm, fishing, or food harvesting in the community forest [52]; or natural disasters [53]; as well as those that may not be related to creative tourism activities. Secondly, prior models were suitable for a qualitative study approach, and framed the study especially in Thailand context. Some studies may have used different participation [11, 21-24] and tourists' experience models [14, 29-31] from this study, but results can be shared and explainable. New issues have emerged, especially the new technologies that are widely used in interpretation after COVID-19, such as communication through social media.

4.4.2 Practical implications

Results from this research contribute in the following issues. First, the seasonal calendar can be applied suitably to similar creative tourism activities in the real situation, or could be adapted to a different context. However, the results shown can be explained with reasonable logic in this seasonal calendar. Interpretation techniques used traditionally, as well as the ones that emerged especially after COVID-19, can be useful and should not be neglected to upskill and reskill creative tourism entrepreneurs to welcome a different generation of people learning in different styles [50, 54]. Participation model can be applied to explain as a traditional model [21]; however, active participation is the key to creative tourism and can't be dismissed. While this research article grouped tourists' experiences as part of beneficiary participation, the results show to interested parties how to improve quantity and quality of tourists' experiences.

4.5 Limitations of the study

This research article studied a qualitative approach to creative tourism in environmental issues from 10 cases to investigate seasonal calendar, theories of interpretation, participation, and tourists' experiences from entrepreneurs' perspectives. Additionally, this study only assessed the supply side, not the demand side represented by the creative tourists.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study assessed 10 creative tourism sites with activities especially in environmental issues in Thailand, in order to extend knowledge about seasonal calendar, interpretation model theory, participation model theory, and creative tourists' experiences theory from the creative tourism entrepreneurs' perspective. The selected sites were mostly situated in southern Thailand; however, some environmental creative activities may be similar to those in other regions of Thailand, such as crab bank, fish homeland conservation, and organic farm. Further, two activities in northern and northeastern Thailand were selected because they were extremely dominant cases, and should not be neglected in this study. In future research on the same activities but in a different region, possibly different results in a different context will be found.

Active participation was the key to fulfilling the creative tourists' expectations in terms of sustainable knowledge, skills, satisfaction, environmental contribution, and/or added value in monetary or non-monetary terms, for both the creative tourists as well as the creative entrepreneurs when they were sharing ideas (co-creation). Both personal and non-personal interpretations were found, and some were extending knowledge from previous traditional interpretation theory. In addition, new emerging technologies have become influences on creative tourism, especially websites and social media (Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Line, and Messenger), enabling continued exchanges of creative ideas.

Undeniably some creative tourism activities were greenwashing for a feelgood experience to a few creative tourists, or to creative organisations. However, at least these were a good step to inspire creative tourists for continued concerns in environmental issues in the future, such as the loss of seagrass, environmental disasters, conflicts in environmental resources, and environmental conservation in local ways. Besides, the creative tourism entrepreneurs will keep pursuing their creative activities with/or without the creative tourists. Creative tourism in environmental issues is a secondary activity to extend experiences to others, while the entrepreneurs continue to pursue their passions, or to get additional income, while these creative tourism entrepreneurs always keep solving environmental problems with their own creative activities.

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